

13 July 1981
MLD-1027

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS

FROM: Chief, London Bureau

THROUGH: Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT: Monthly Report -- London Bureau -- June 1981

I. GENERAL

The British Government's decision to cut funds for the BBC's external services was the big story of the month for our colleagues in the monitoring service. The cuts will not affect the monitoring service but as members of the External Broadcasting wing of the BBC its managers will be involved in the planning needed to cope with them. The TIMES quoted Douglas Muggeridge, Managing Director of External Broadcasting, as terming the cuts "savage" and "endangering the worldwide standing and effectiveness of the external service." The British press has commented in similar vein. The chairman of the BBC's board of directors, Mr. George Howard, has also, of course, condemned the cuts and a full-scale battle against them is in progress.

II. OPERATIONS

A. Editorial/Monitorial

1. A slow pouch delayed receipt of DRD's guidance on the MIDAS formats, leaving the bureau with only a week for digestion before it had to be implemented. The initial result has been to slow down the work flow considerably, particularly in the Telecommunications Section where pinkie coding has also begun. Most difficulties will disappear as familiarity is gained in handling the many new MIDAS tasks, but true touch typing cannot be resumed until the EXTEL keyboard is suitably modified.

-2-

2. Meetings and speeches dominated operations throughout the month. The BBC's Polish team continued intensive efforts with reportage of the numerous precongress report-back and election conferences, the 2-day party plenum at which Kania provided Poland's first public reaction to the CPSU's hard-line letter, and the 10-hour session of the Sejm carried live by Warsaw Domestic Service. The first available text of the CPSU Central Committee's letter warning the PZPR appeared in the 10 June issue of LE MONDE, and PMU processed it expeditiously. Tapping an unusual source for substantive material, Warsaw's ANTENA magazine, BBC monitors translated an interview with Jozef Klasa, the PZPR's media watchdog, on the relationship between the party and television. Brezhnev emerged briefly from his usual summer retreat to make an appearance and a speech at the Supreme Soviet session. Moscow radio carried the speech live. The downfall and disappearance of Bani-Sadr and the explosion that killed over 70 religious party officials occasioned at least one speech by practically every Iranian notable. Most were processed at Caversham, but reception and staffing difficulties required some assistance from Gulf Bureau. Staffing problems also arose in other areas: PMU monitor [] assisted the BBC for a fortnight while its Arabic team was particularly shorthanded.
3. Reception of PARS remained intermittent at both London and Gulf, with transmitter problems apparently the culprit. On the other hand, the BBC was able to backstop print MENA several times when heavy garbling prevented coverage at Nicosia. The most significant VCVG outage of recent memory occurred on the 1st; a break in Paris brought the line down for 24 hours. An alternate phone link was established, minimizing disruption.
4. Messages from several embassies indicated the enduring interest in the bureau's product. One immediate request from Moscow for text of the above-mentioned CPSU letter was followed a few days later by another for texts of all significant Polish statements and speeches. Rabat suggested translation of the speech by King Hassan prior to his

STAT

-3-

departure for the OAU summit. The message and item crossed. Queried about its continued interest in material on the situation in Kosovo Province, Belgrade replied that it and the mission in Zagreb wished to remain recipients for another 60 days. In a cable to the Department, info dropped to London and Gulf, Islamabad complimented FBIS and reiterated its satisfaction, and that of the Government of Pakistan, with the excellent service they are receiving.

B. Cologne Unit

1. The 11th FDJ Parliament generated much work for the unit. The 4-hour opening speech by Egon Krenz ran 28 takes and involved 3 days of processing. Quick action by [] supervisor permitted coverage of an unexpected address by Honecker carried on television. The short notice precluded use of the regular line to Berlin, but a commercial line was secured and a recording obtained with nominal delay. Several monitors worked overtime to complete the speech. STAT
2. Two requests from the Bonn Embassy were handled in good order. The Political Section expressed its appreciation for the rapid translation of an Egon Bahr article in the SPD weekly VORWAERTS criticizing the U.S. stance on TNF. Bahr's upcoming visit to Moscow gave special importance to the item, which was filed to the Secretary of State's office at the section's request. As a special service to ICA, monitors translated an interview given to STERN by the State Department's Lawrence Eagleburger.
3. Several video cassette recorders and a monitor/viewer were received at month's end. It marked the unit's entry into the realm of full television monitoring and will add a new dimension to operations once the equipment is installed and the monitors are trained.

III. ADMINISTRATION

1. [] and family arrived in Cologne on 24 June. Bill assumed duties as chief of the unit on 2 July, replacing [] who will become deputy chief of Paraguay Bureau after home leave. STAT
STAT
2. Junior Editor [] arrived PCS on the 30th. STAT

-4-

3. Gulf Bureau monitor [] who arrived here on 8 April on detail to the BBC in order to obtain British documentation, returned to Gulf on 14 June.

STAT

IV. VISITS

To the bureau: Deputy Director [] 9-12 June on regular management inspection trip and to discuss current developments with staffers; NEAAD linguist [] on the 11th to discuss Arabic publications with PMU; UD Economics Program Chief [] on the 18th for familiarization with PMU operations; [] 22 and 23 June for consultations with bureau and BBC management prior to assuming duties as Chief, Cologne Unit; SA/OpsGp [] and PMCD officer Bob [] 29 June-4 July to discuss personnel matters with bureau management. From the Bureau: The Bureau Chief, Deputy Chief and Communications Supervisor paid an orientation visit to Croughton ASC on the 18th.

STAT

STAT

STAT

STAT

STAT

STAT

STAT

Attachments

cc: Chief, Austrian Bureau
Chief, Cologne Unit